

The President's Daily Brief

4 May 1970

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Vietnamese Communists in Cambodia have managed to avoid a major confrontation with the advancing allies. (Page 1)

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Cambodia
 (Page 2)

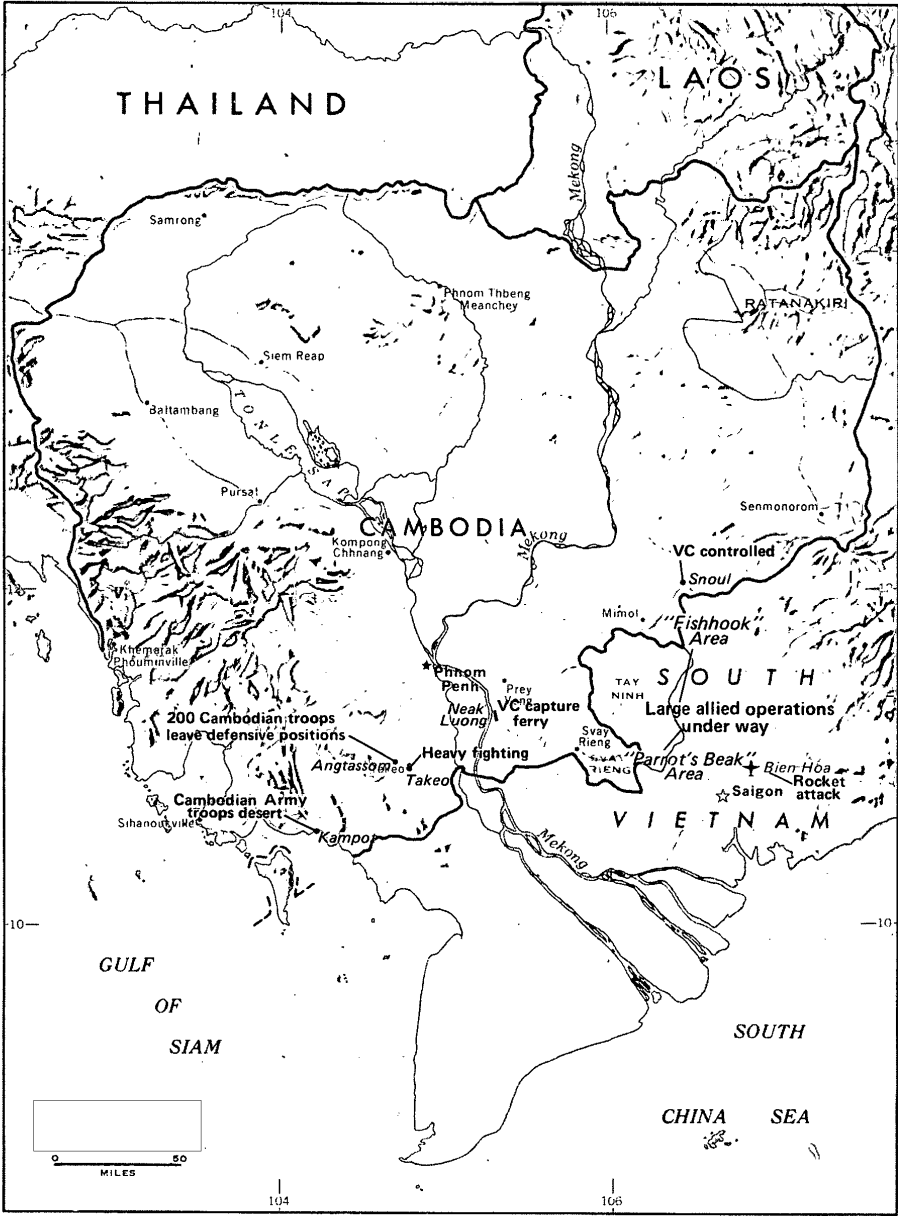
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Hanoi's propagandists swing into action. (Page 4)

The USSR is sending its top leaders to Prague to sign the new friendship treaty. (Page 5)

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Cambodia-South Vietnam: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA - SOUTH VIETNAM

Enemy forces continue to avoid major combat with allied soldiers operating against their Cambodian base areas, but their casualties are mounting. Contacts in both the "Fishhook" and "Parrot's Beak" areas have been sporadic and generally light thus far. Enemy losses of both materiel and personnel have risen over the weekend, however, largely because of successful allied air strikes.

The COSVN radio stations that went off the air abruptly on 1 May--shortly before allied forces moved across the border--now have resumed communicating. However, the number of messages being passed is less than one-quarter of the former daily total. There is tenuous evidence that some of these radio terminals have begun dispersing throughout the Mimot area.

Despite their lack of heavy resistance to the allied sweeps to date, some enemy forces have been deploying within the operational area, according to communications intelligence, and could be planning counteractions. Two regiments of the North Vietnamese 7th Division and the division headquarters have converged on an area along the northeast Tay Ninh Province - Cambodian border that places them behind allied units participating in the Mimot operation. A third regiment which has been monitoring allied moves near the border appears to be preparing for some tactical activity in western Tay Ninh Province.

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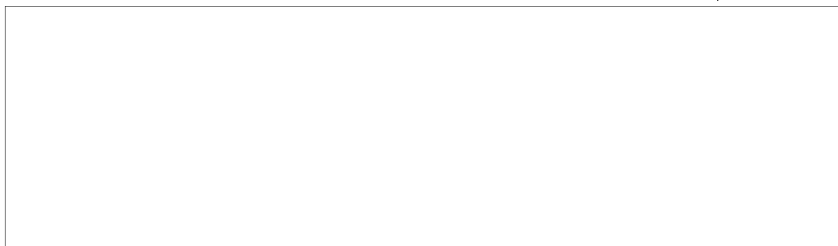
Within South Vietnam, the Communists are carrying on with their current offensive phase. The night of 2-3 May was one of the most active periods since 1 April. Most of the action was in the III and IV Corps areas covering the southern half of the country. Mortar or rocket fire struck two US air installations, including Bien Hoa air base. In the delta, rural outposts manned by local security forces seemed to have been particularly singled out for harassment.

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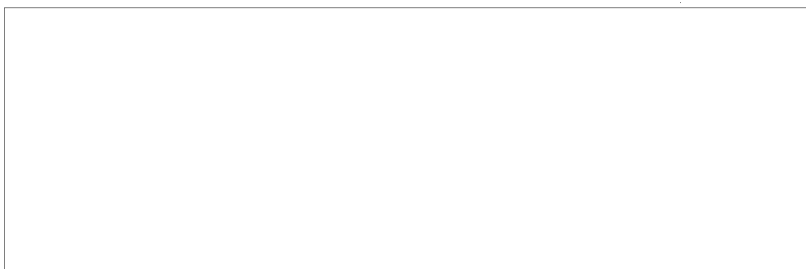
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CAMBODIA

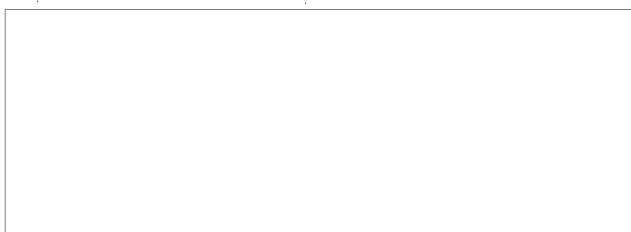
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In military action this weekend, Vietnamese Communists apparently have captured the Neak Luong ferry, thereby cutting Phnom Penh's access to Svay Rieng Province. The government is launching an operation to retake the position. Heavy fighting has also flared again in Takeo town, which has been under sporadic harassment for several weeks. According to an intercepted Cambodian message, the Communists occupied the town of Snoul, northeast of the Fishhook area, on 1 May.

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The fresh emergence of the Cambodian left was also revealed in an anti-US statement of the Pracheachon ("People's Group") recently broadcast by Hanoi. Long considered to be a front of the Cambodian Communist Party, the Pracheachon has been either underground or moribund for almost a decade.

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NORTH VIETNAM

The Vietnamese Communists have begun to denounce the US action in Cambodia with sharp and sometimes vitriolic words, but they have given little indication of what their next move will be. The Communists accuse Washington of open aggression, escalation of the war, and violation of the 1954 Geneva accords, and contend that the US is now committed to seeking a military victory rather than a political settlement.

Aside from leaving an impression that an even deeper freeze in Paris is in store, the rhetoric of the Communists so far suggests that a holding operation is under way. By issuing these hard hitting but noncommittal statements, Hanoi is able to gain time for its decision-makers to reflect on the new situation and perhaps consult with its allies.

* * *

Various Radio Hanoi broadcasts charged that waves of aircraft attacked several populated areas in two provinces of southern North Vietnam. Intercepted North Vietnamese civil communications listed nearly 30 civilians killed by air strikes at a state farm and water conservation project on 1 and 2 May.

A Foreign Ministry communiqué issued on 2 May declared that the air strikes were "intolerable... calculated acts" in violation of the US "pledge" in November 1968 to halt all bombing of the North and that they "will seriously affect" the Paris talks. Although threatening no specific retaliatory action, the statement hinted that Hanoi may no longer consider itself under constraints regarding military use of the DMZ or attacks on South Vietnamese cities.

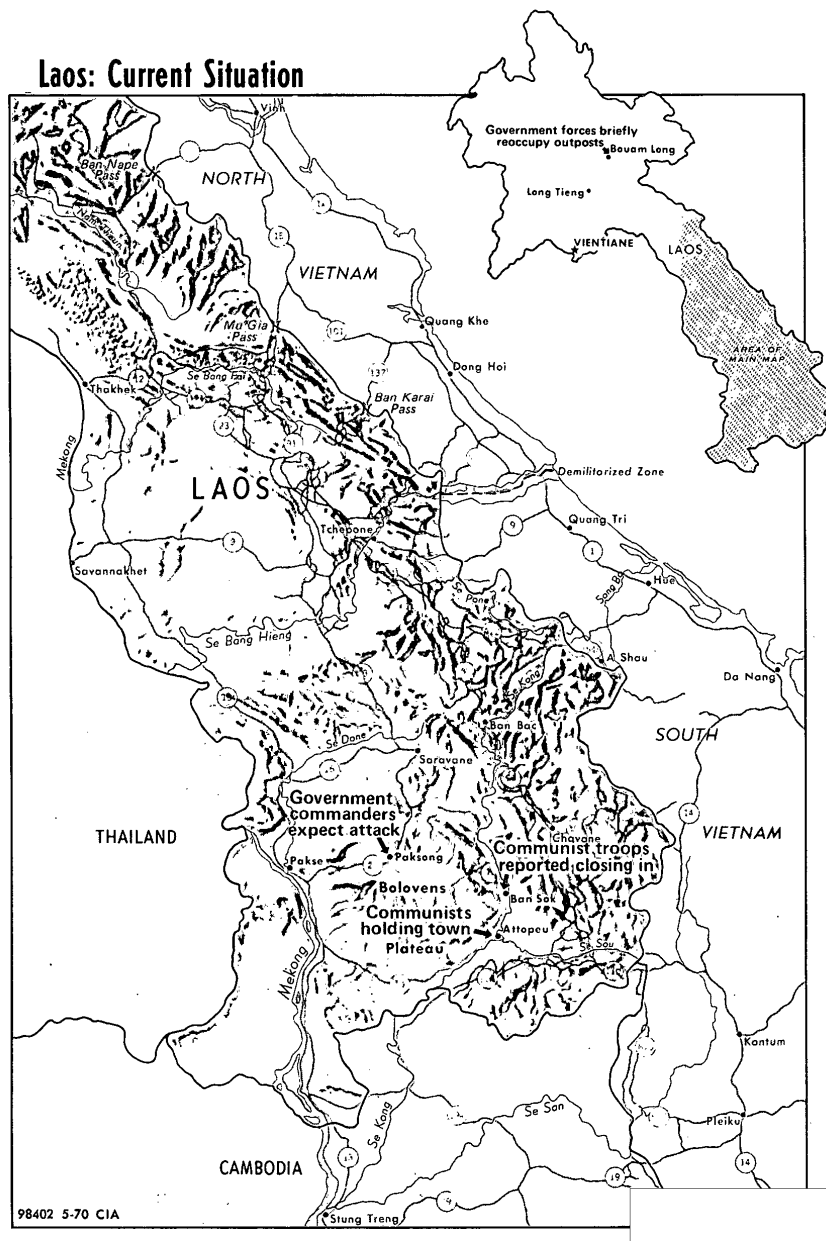
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CZECHOSLOVAKIA-USSR

A high level delegation, including Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Gromyko, is expected in Prague this week to sign a new bilateral friendship treaty. East Germany's Ulbricht and Poland's Gomulka may also be there for the ceremony.

The treaty might become a model for future treaties between the USSR and the other East European countries. Some East Europeans fear that it will include a statement stressing the need for joint Czechoslovak-Soviet defense of Czechoslovakia's western border, which would be a step toward closer military integration within the Warsaw Pact. No one expects the treaty to give permanent status to the Soviet troops now stationed in Czechoslovakia.

The treaty and the visit will tend to reinforce Husak's position. It could be the occasion for Brezhnev to endorse Husak more warmly than he yet has.



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NOTES

Laos: Maintaining moderate pressure on government positions in southern Laos, Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops overran a small post near the Se Kong River on 1 May. Communist forces may also be closing in on the government position at Ban Sok, a few miles to the north. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], additional enemy troops have moved onto the Bolovens Plateau, and three of the government's guerrilla outposts on the plateau are threatened. Lao military officers are also expecting an attack against Paksong, a village on the main road from Pakse.

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In northern Laos, there have been some clashes in the Bouam Long and Long Tieng areas, but no severe fighting has developed there in the last few days.

Egypt: Foreign Minister Mahmud Riyad summoned Donald Bergus to his office Saturday evening to state that Nasir's May Day speech actually was an "appeal for peace directed at President Nixon." Riyad explicitly denied that a threat was intended. He characterized the speech as a statement of Egyptian policy and claimed it was not just "propaganda for local consumption."

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